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Bochsler, Daniel ; Szöcsik, Edina

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Daniel Bochsler and Edina Szöcsik

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Abstract

Parties of ethnic minorities are flourishing in a large number of ethnically divided democracies. While academic research has studied their emergence and success, we know little about intra-group party competition. This paper discusses reasons for intra-group political plurality, with a focus on intra-party conflict and intra-group party competition: it explains the political orientation of ethnic minority parties and their intra-group challengers as a consequence of the inclusion of minority parties into government. The inclusion of minority parties into national governments produces an inherent conflict between pragmatic office-seekers and radical partisans. In minority parties that have governmental responsibilities, the pragmatist view overwhelms, whilst in those parties in opposition, radical voices dominate. The formation of two intra-Hungarian challenger parties in Romania and in Slovakia in 2007 and 2009 represent two very similar cases, which appear to be in line with our hypotheses.

Keywords: electoral competition, ethnic minority parties, government participation, intra-ethnic competition

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1. Introduction

Recently, the formerly dominant Hungarian minority parties in Slovakia and in Romania have been confronted with new parties, challenging their monopoly in the representational area, and opening a new chapter in ethnic party competition in both countries. In Slovakia, the formerly dominant minority party lost its governmental position, and in opposition, it has increasingly supported more extreme stances. This has led to the formation of a new Hungarian led party under the label Most–Híd ('bridge') in 2009, with the goal of addressing voters of both ethnic groups, and bridging the increasing ethnic gap. In Romania, the formerly dominant minority association has become more and more entangled with the Romanian state. It has been challenged by a series of new Hungarian political organisations since 2000, including a new minority party, which is playing the radicalisation game, demanding immediate autonomy for Hungarian enclave in Romania. The new party accuses the formerly dominant Hungarian elite of betraying Hungarian interests in Bucharest.

This article sheds light on a widely neglected aspect of representation in ethnically divided societies. In the classical literature on power-sharing, representation is described as the formation of political parties that stand for the different segments of a society. There is no competition within these social segments, and instead, the dominant party has a representational monopoly. The empirical reality in many ethnically divided societies looks quite different, however. Oftentimes, there are salient differences in the political preferences within the same ethnic groups, and in many cases, this is reflected in intra-group competition between political parties of the ethnic majorities or between parties addressing the same ethnic minority group. New findings on intra-group competition might ultimately complement or alter the view on power-sharing, as they show that ethnic majorities and minorities are not homogeneous groups, but internally divided.

Our study contributes to the understanding of intra-group divisions, by looking at political parties of ethnic minorities, as the main actors of electoral competition and representation of minority groups in divided societies. It argues that there might be exogenous reasons for the political moderation or radicalisation of parts of the ethnic minorities. We show that government inclusion - as the most important element of power-sharing arrangements - can destroy the political unity of the ethnic minorities, and contribute to their radicalisation.

This stands in contrast to the classical ethnic out-bidding hypothesis, according to which within-group competition is the main driver for radicalisation (Rabushka and Shepsle 73-75; Horowitz). The focus of this article is on dominant parties of ethnic minorities. Contrary to the outbidding view, it argues that the inclusion or exclusion of ethnic minority parties into governmental coalitions alters the political balance between moderates and radicals *within the*

party. Growing internal competition leads to party splits, and the position of the new party depends on the ideological position of the formerly dominant party. We argue that this contributes to the explanation of why in Slovakia, the intra-Hungarian challenger positioned itself more moderately than the formerly dominant party, while in Romania, the challenger outbid the established governing party with more radical positions.

We selected two cases which are similar with regard to the relative size and the regional concentration of the minority groups, the role of external actors (the kin state and the EU), and (in most of the periods) to the incentives of the electoral system. While we hold these contextual factors constant, we study the changes in the inclusion of minority parties into national governments in time and across countries.

The next section of this paper outlines our theoretical ideas about the reasons for different forms of within-group party competition. Section three introduces the two cases selected for this study, which are analysed over time in section four. Thereafter, the hypothesised effect of governmental inclusion is discussed in a comparative perspective.

2. The interaction between within-group political dynamics and a party's role in the political system

Traditional literature on ethnic parties established a rather sceptical view on the capacity of ethnic parties to maintain democratic stability in ethnically divided societies. This scepticism is also based on the outbidding hypothesis (Mitchell; Gormley-Heenan and Macginty; Rabushka and Shepsle; Horowitz 342-60). It states that in situations of politicised ethnic lines, competition between parties addressing the same ethnic group leads to a race to the extreme: each competitor will need to position itself as the most credible representative of minority interests, involving increasingly radical arguments. This mutual radicalisation of ethnic parties will exacerbate ethnic conflicts and eventually undermine political stability.

Recent studies have shown that ethnic outbidding is not an inevitable result of competition within the same group (Chandra; Mitchell; Gormley-Heenan and Macginty; Mitchell, Evans and O'Leary; Zuber). We aim to contribute to this recent literature by analysing ethnic minority parties who represent the interests of ethnic minorities in party competition. As a starting point, we argue that the form of competition and more specifically, the number of parties representing an ethnic group, depend on the size and local concentration of the group, in combination with the electoral rules. Electoral laws might give incentives to certain ethnic minority groups to vote uniformly for a single minority party. This happens if restrictive electoral rules de facto allow only one minority party to gain representation in the national parliament, and therefore prevent the minority group splitting its votes between several parties

(Barkan; Mozaffar, Scarritt and Galaich; Bochsler "Two of the Same"). This restrictive logic of national electoral systems might be contradicted, however, by the logic of contestation that prevails at the local level. Namely, if the same minority group represents the majority of inhabitants in some municipalities or provinces, there is an inherent drive for an intra-ethnic differentiation and for the representation of the group by multiple ethnic parties (Bochsler *Contestation in Multi-Level Party Systems;* Bochsler "Two of the Same").

The first stage of our argument refers to dominant parties of ethnic minorities, and looks at political dynamics within such parties.[1] Even though dominant parties aim at representing the entire minority group, there might be internal programmatic differences. To understand how these two groups within ethnic minority parties collide over governmental participation, we rely on the literature on party politics, and consider different types of goals and benefits that political parties strive for (Strøm). Political parties aim at maximising their votes in elections, which can both be a goal in itself, but also contributes to two further goals. Firstly, party members have policy goals (Wittman; Chappell and Keech). Governing participation might help parties to include some of their goals into the coalition program. On the other hand, the oppositional role gives parties the possibility to maintain and campaign for radical changes, and to keep the pressure on for policy moves. Secondly, parties are also interested in gaining office, in order to appease senior party officials with political mandates which can generate further benefits to a larger circle of beneficiaries. As ethnic parties count on sectional constituencies, the clientelistic distribution of the benefits of office spoils is particularly easy (Kitschelt).

Moderates and radicals, but also party basis and cadres do not weight these goals equally. While moderates and the party cadres profit from government inclusion – as this provides access to office and requires a moderation of the party, radicals and the party basis might be more sceptical about compromises that enable the forming of coalitions with adversary partners. This does not mean that moderates and cadres would agree with compromises at every price, nor that the radicals and the party basis would always chose to stay in opposition; rather we suggest that these differences in degree become vital and irreconcilable if cross-pressures accumulate.

Two circumstances can fuel conflicts within the political elite of the minority group particularly. Firstly, such internal splits of the minority can be fuelled either by the ideological dimension (moderates/pragmatists versus radicals), especially when the dominant minority

[1] Parties of minorities, which run (almost) uncontested in elections, and gain the votes of the overwhelming majority of the voters who identify with the minority group. This gives them de-facto a monopoly in representing the views of the minority in parliament.

party needs to agree to compromises in order to enter coalitions. While in some cases, this conflict might sometimes be overcome if the minority party adopts two faces, a responsible face towards the mainstream society, and a radical face for electoral purposes towards the kin group (Mitchell, Evans and O'Leary), the possibilities for such an intra-party balance are limited.

Second, the party cadres will be more open for programmatic concessions than the basis. The party cadres personally benefit from being in public office, and the longer a party stays in government, without delivering favourable and the in the coalition agreement agreed policy outcomes, the higher the risk for such a conflict. Occasionally, these tensions lead to the emergence of an *intra-ethnic challenger*. As such, we define parties aiming at the votes of an ethnic minority group, which previously has been represented by a dominant minority party.

Governmental inclusion is not only a reason for intra-group splits, but it also determines the direction of the dominant and of the challenger parties. No matter whether a split has occurred or not, the inclusion of a dominant minority party into government strengthens the office-seekers and the moderates within the party. Political compromises in favour of the minority appear more reachable, and the party cadres can benefit from access to public office, and spread these benefits. Therefore, we expect that in governmental periods the moderate and office-oriented party wing will rather be strengthened than in oppositional periods.

Hypothesis 1:
Dominant parties of ethnic minorities are prone to radicalise in opposition and to become more moderate in government.

In the second stage, we address intra-group dynamics in the case of several parties, i.e. once a political split within the ethnic group has occurred. While the position of the (previously) dominant party is a consequence of its (non-)inclusion into the governmental coalition, the intra-group challenger will take the opposite course, as this is where the challenger can recruit its members and gain votes. If the (formerly) dominant party is included into the governmental coalition, the moderates dominate and the radicals will break away. If, however, the the (formerly) dominant is in opposition, then the majority of this party follows a radical course, while the moderates defect. We expect that the governmental or oppositional role of the ethnic minority party has different consequences in cases of party splits.

Hypothesis 2:

The within-group challenger takes the opposite position from the dominant minority party. Hence, when the dominant minority party is in government, the challenger party is likely to present a radical program; when the dominant minority party is in opposition, the challenger will instead tend towards a conciliatory program.

The challenger party has the prospect of attracting a considerable number of voters, as it mobilises those voters at the basis of an ethnic minority group who are disappointed by the dominant party in government. Also, it offers a new platform, which differs from the dominant party, and therefore will attract a part of the electorate. This constitutes an electoral threat to the dominant minority party, and it will therefore need to consider the electoral claims of the new challenger, and readjust its own positions. If it does so, it will not allow the challenger to win a sufficient number of votes to survive. This situation has been characterised as ethnic outbidding (Gormley-Heenan and Macginty; Mitchell, Evans and O'Leary; Rabushka and Shepsle).

In the classical outbidding model, the radicals are always more successful than the moderates in winning votes, as they are perceived as the more credible representatives of the ethnic interests. We alter this view and argue that as moderate challengers ask for less, they might have more leverage in negotiations and are able to exert policy influence. Hence moderates are might able to represent themselves as the more credible representative of the group compared to the radicals. In a nutshell, Figure 1 presents our arguments. While in government, the dominant minority party (DMP) moderates its claims, and as a consequence, splits up and is challenged by a radical challenger (IGC). Contrarily, the exclusion of the dominant minority party from the government leads to a more intense inter-ethnic conflict, to radicalisation of the dominant minority party, and to the split-off of a moderate intra-group challenger.

xxx Figure 1 near here xxx

3. Research design: the Hungarian minority parties in Romania and in the Slovak Republic

We test our hypotheses through the comparison of the Hungarian minority parties in Romania and in the Slovak Republic. As discussed, the emergence of parties of ethnic minorities depends on the relative size and the territorial concentration of the minority, and the electoral

rules. These are very similar in the two countries. The Hungarian minorities account for some 6.6% of the countrywide population in Romania and 9.7% in Slovakia according to the last available census data[1], and live partly concentrated in North-western Romania (Transylvania) and in the South of Slovakia along the Hungarian border, with some predominately ethnic Hungarian counties in the Central Romanian Carpathians (Harghita, Covasna) and in Southwestern Slovak borderland (Dunajská Streda).

The present-day Slovakia and Transylvania once belonged to the Eastern part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and only after WWI, Hungary lost these areas to Romania and newly independent Czechoslovakia. The communist period had a mixed impact on the rights of Hungarian minorities. Romania knew a short-living Hungarian Autonomous Region in Transylvania (1952-68), and after the upheavals in Hungary in 1956, ethnic Hungarians in Romania were confronted with a more and more aggressive assimilation policy (Csergő 30-1; Bottoni). In Czechoslovakia, the Hungarians were less in the spotlight, as the Slovaks were the main minority. The Hungarians were just the minority within the Slovak part of the country. After a short period, where the post-WWII Beneš government expelled German and Hungarian minorities, Hungarians re-gained their citizenship in 1948, and established their own cultural institutions (Csergő 29-30).

In the post-communist period, the policies of Hungary towards its external minorities have interfered with the discussion about minority rights both in Romania and Slovakia. Considering the legacies of changing borders, the mainstream political scene in both countries translates claims for territorial autonomy as a first step to secession of the Hungarian areas (Csergő 19-21; Bochsler and Szöcsik). In the Slovak case – Slovakia has a shorter history as a nation-state than Romania, and Hungarians settle on the border to Hungary – such fears might even play to a higher degree. Indeed, the Hungarians of Slovakia have been more hesitant to ask for territorial reforms and collective rights for minorities are perceived as much more radical by the Slovak mainstream society than they are in Romania. Henceforth, we spend attention to two external players, which have influenced the dynamics of Hungarian minority representation in a similar fashion in both countries. We do not claim that the influence of Hungarian kin state policies and European integration have no impact on the course of the Hungarian minority parties, but rather that they create a similar context for the domestic political players to negotiate minority rights.

In the two countries, the Hungarian minorities face similar institutional hurdles for political representation. Romania raised its legal threshold in the electoral system for national parliamentary elections from 3% to 5% in 2000, while for coalitions larger thresholds apply.[2]

Slovakia used to have a 5% threshold, but in 1998, the threshold for coalitions was raised substantially. In both cases, the threshold is fairly high in comparison to the size of the minority groups, and makes intra-group party competition difficult, if not impossible. For a single minority party, which mobilises the largest part of the ethnic Hungarians to vote for them, such a threshold is not an issue. However, once there are two competitors, one of them, if not both, will not win enough votes for parliamentary representation, and makes intra-group competition unattractive and risky (Bochsler "Two of the Same"). No wonder though that the Hungarian minority parties have merged into a single party, when the electoral threshold in Slovakia made the previous coalition of several minority parties unsuitable (Millard 91).[3] Both cases appear as particularly relevant with regard to intra-ethnic party competition, as the national political institutions appear to hinder intra-party competition.

Our hypotheses posit that the institutional position of the ethnic minority parties is the main determinant for their programmatic position. We measure ethnic parties' positions on an ethnonational dimension of party competition on that an ethnic majority and an ethnic minority parties are confronted with each other and formulate competing demands on the position of their groups in the state. We understand the radicalisation of an ethnic minority party as putting more extreme ethnically based demands forward. Legal rights that guarantee the protection of national minorities can be ranked from the principle of non-discrimination, to individual special rights for minorities that guarantee the preservation of their cultural distinctiveness, to self-rule in certain policy fields or territory (Brunner and Küpper). This hierarchy reflects an increasingly comprehensive system of minority protection. If an ethnic minority party's claims change in the direction of collective special rights, this will be perceived as radicalisation. In the following section, we map the development of the institutional position of the ethnic minority parties and their programmatic positions over the time. We test the hypotheses by tracing how the institutional positions influenced the political competition within the ethnic minority and the programmatic position of the established and the challenger ethnic minority parties.

4. From intra-party competition to multi-party competition

In order to test our hypotheses, we investigate the degree of radicalism of the Hungarian minority parties' demands, and the internal development of the minority parties depending on their role in the political system over the time. After their split, the relationship between the new and the old parties is analysed. Our visualisation in figures 2 (Romania) and 3 (Slovakia) might help readers to get an overview of the process, and to understand our interpretation of the party trajectories. We have plotted the governing coalition (top) and the main Hungarian

minority parties (bottom), their splits and mergers. The inclusion of a minority party into the national government coalition is symbolised with two rings. We also display whether this is related to changes in their radicalism on ethnic-nationalist issues: Radical parties or governing coalition with a majority nationalist program appear at the extremities, while moderates of both camps are in the centre. [4] Finally, the figures contain information about the composition of the government of Hungary (top). We point out the involvement of the Hungarian kin state policies in ethnic relations in Romania and Slovakia in the following paragraphs.

4.1. Developments in Romania

xxx Figure 2 about here xxx

1990-1996: Promising start and relapse into opposition and isolation

During communism the Hungarian minority in Romania could not establish an own mass organisation. Some exponents of the Hungarian minority became prominent members of the emerging democratic opposition in the 1980s. The UDMR was only founded in 1989 as an umbrella organisation encompassing different ideological platforms and interest groups of the Hungarian minority in Romania. In its first political document it called for the re-establishment of an independent Hungarian education system, the use of the minority language in public administration, representation in public administration, in the judicial system and in political decision-making and for collective rights (UDMR). When after the revolution, the National Salvation Front (FSN) took power in 1990, the UDMR started to cooperate closely with the government (see figure 2, dotted rings). The government re-established Hungarian language high schools which made the UDMR confident about the future, but the efforts erupted in violent inter-ethnic clashes in the town of Tîrgu Mureş in 1990, where the ethnic mix of the population is 50-50%. The FSN was not willing to intervene in favour of the Hungarian minority, and, as shown in figure 2, turned towards a nationalist direction (for instance, with the new constitution, which ruled out cultural or territorial autonomy for minorities). The UDMR ceased cooperation with the FSN. This conflict was further accentuated when after 1994, FSDN (FSN's successor) formed a coalition with two ultra-nationalist parties, the Party of Romanian National Unity (PUNR) and Greater Romania Party (PRM). The UDMR reacted by elaborating its concept of autonomy for the Hungarian minority in 1994. The awakening autonomy aspirations of the UDMR were supported by the conservative government in neighbouring Budapest. The support of the

Hungarian minorities abroad was the priority of the foreign policy of the conservative government in Hungary (Horváth 33-34). However, the claim for autonomy was perceived, as too controversial in Romania. It led to the exit of the UDMR from the Democratic Convention of Romania (CDR), an alliance of opposition parties. In 1995 a new law on education was adopted that restricted the existing rights to study in minority languages at all educational levels. The UDMR strongly rejected this law and was backed by some international organisations (Horváth 24-32,39-42,93-97).

Within the UDMR two rivalling positions emerged. The more radical position, which claimed autonomy as an indispensable right of the national minorities, was represented by the internal Reform bloc, led by the popular bishop László Tőkés. Party president Béla Markó took a more moderate position, advocating autonomy through a step by step strategy, with continued negotiation of institutional solutions.

1996-2000: The UDMR in the government coalition

After the 1996 elections, CDR and the Democratic Party (PD) formed the new centre-right and pro-European government and included the UDMR in an over-sized coalition, in order to underline their commitment to reforms and a pro-Western policy (Mandel 94). Both partners moved towards more moderate positions on ethnic issues (see figure 2). Especially, the UDMR, in exchange for their inclusion into government, made the important programmatic concession of dropping its controversial claim for territorial autonomy, and focused on more moderate aspects of its program. It aimed at improvements with regard to the use of minority languages in the public sphere and education in Hungarian including demanding the establishment of a separate Hungarian university (Horváth; Kántor and Bárdi 162).[5] The EU strongly supported the inclusion of UDMR into the government coalition and made a friendship treaty between Romania and Hungarian as accession criteria which was concluded in 1996 (lead by a Socialist government, see figure 2) (Jarábik 144).

After a promising start, the UDMR's success was partial: guarantees of using minority languages in local administrations and the establishment of a minority University were both blocked (Kántor and Bárdi 169). Minority language tertiary education was legislated, but not implemented (Horváth 48).

The Reform Bloc within the UDMR became suspicious of the UDMR's participation in government, and repeatedly asked the UDMR to leave the coalition. Disputes arose around the drop of its claim for territorial autonomy, and on the plans for Hungarian higher education institutions (Bakk 47; Mandel 95). The basic treaty between Hungary and Romania that was

signed by the Hungarian Socialist government in 1996 (see figure 2) was especially by the UDMR's radical platform harshly criticized since the Hungarian government gave up its claim to include the UDMR in the negotiation as a third party and since the treaty delegitimized the claim for territorial autonomy (Horváth, 2004: 45; Kulcsàr & Bradatan, 2007: 307; Mák, 2000: 24-32).

The minority government of 2000-2004 and first internal splits of the UDMR

Even if after the 2000 elections, the government changed from the centre-right to the centre-left, the UDMR's involvement changed little. The winning Social Democrats (PSDR) formed a minority government, but the UDMR agreed to support it based on yearly elaborated cooperation agreements which contained detailed policy demands of the UDMR. These were partly blocked in the stage of implementation. Instead of territorial autonomy, the partners agreed on a decentralisation process and regional development of the Hungarian populated areas, especially infrastructure projects. The partners agreed to create Hungarian faculties at the Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, but were blocked later by the senate of the University, whereas the establishment of an independent Hungarian university remained a taboo. A law on the use of minority languages in local public administration was passed.

The UDMR was increasingly under pressure from the moves of the new conservative government in Budapest (see figure 2). In 2002, the Hungarian government passed the so called Status Law, giving certain rights within Hungary to the external minorities, a law criticised both by Romania and Slovakia due to its extra-territorial consequences. While the UDMR initially supported the law, the moderate fractions soon joined the critics. In contrast, the radical wing of the UDMR would have favoured an even more radical option of dual citizenship, and saw the law as a means to stop the assimilation of Hungarians abroad (Horváth 53; Kántor and Bárdi 175).

The radical was increasingly dissatisfied with political compromises with the Romanian majority parties, leading to the first internal splits of the UDMR. The activities of several newly emerging challenger political organisations, which quickly followed each other, were initially limited and centred in Harghita and Covasna, the two counties with a strong Hungarian majority. First, supported by the radical wing of the UDMR and by Fidesz, the conservative party in Hungary, the Civic Association for Oderheiu (UPE) ran as a rival Hungarian party in the local elections of 2000 (Udvardy). Its mandates were later cancelled by a controversial court rule, due to irregularities in party founding. The UPE was followed in 2004 by the Hungarian Civic Union (MPSZ), an organisation again with local aims, funded

under strong involvement of the UPE. Its leader, the local mayor of Odorheiu Secuiesc, a predominately ethnic Hungarian town in Harghita, was a member of the Reform Bloc within the UDMR. Due to the resistance of the UDMR, it could not register as a political party, and ran its candidates in the national and district elections in the two mentioned counties (Bakk, Szász and Székely 35), on the list of the non-ethnic People's Action Party (PAP) instead.

In parallel, other members of the Reform Bloc within the UDMR established two rivalling organisations in 2003, the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania (CNMT) and the Szekler National Council (CNT) (Mandel 97). CMNT accused the UDMR of being corrupt in government and selling out the establishment of autonomy, the main purpose of the organisation. CNT was focusing on the elaboration of a new plan of territorial autonomy for the Szekler Land[6] (Eplényi 65-66). With the help of MPs of the UDMR's Reform Bloc, the CNMT and the CNT submitted this new autonomy plan to the Parliament in February 2004. Although the Parliament refused the plan a month later (Bakk 52), the initiative brought the issue back onto the political agenda, as the UDMR felt the threat of the CNMT. The UDMR reacted with a proposal to establish the Szekler Land as a development region of Romania (Eplényi 73-75) – which we see as a radicalising step in terms of ethnic relations (see figure 2). The main idea was to enlarge the number of regions in such a way that the new regions would better correspond to the historical, traditional and cultural regional divides and so that the Szekler Land would exist as an independent development region.

Third round of government participation: 2004-2008

In the parliamentary period of 2004-2008, the UDMR was again in government, this time within a centre-right minority coalition, led by the National-Liberal Party (PNL) (see figure 2). The organisation was struggling however, with the new rival organisations of the Hungarian minority. During this period in government, a law providing cultural autonomy for the national minorities that was pushed for by the UDMR was never adopted, although it was part of the coalition agreement. This law was not only strongly opposed by the mainstream Romanian parties, but also by all of the new alternative Hungarian political organisations. Similarly, neither the establishment of an independent Hungarian university, nor the establishment of Hungarian faculties at the Babeş-Bolyai University were achieved. The CNT's proposal for the territorial autonomy of the Szekler land, and the UDMR's demands for the redrawing of the borders of development regions, failed in parliament (Eplényi 73). The sole progress made in the view of the Hungarian minority, was the modification of the

law on local public governance that allowed Hungarian to be retained as an official language in municipalities where the share of Hungarian inhabitants had dropped below 20%.

As it is displayed in figure 2, in the electoral field, the UDMR was challenged in 2007 by the Hungarian Civic Union (MPSZ) that had registered as a political party and renamed itself the Hungarian Civic Party (PCM). The PCM ran its own candidates in the local elections and supported independent candidates in the national elections in 2008 (Kántor and Pászkán 15). While the party elite was recruited from all areas where Hungarian live, its candidates in the elections and votes were mainly concentrated in minority-majority areas – e.g in the Covasna and Harghita regions. Yet, because of its rather weak electoral performance in comparison to the UDMR, the PCM as the main challenger of the UDMR, was slowly replaced by the CNMT, which could count on a very popular and powerful president, Bishop László Tőkés, from Timisoara, far away from the CNMT strongholds. Tőkés successfully took part in the elections for the European Parliament in 2007 as an independent candidate. Nevertheless, the new rival organisations remained relatively weak compared to the UDMR and could not replace the UDMR as the main minority organisation of Hungarians. While in the beginning, the new alternative organisations were united in their campaign for the realisation of autonomy and to act against the UDMR, in time they became entrapped in diverse disputes. Additionally, it slowly came to light that, in terms of internal democratic organisation, they were not necessarily doing better than the UDMR.

The challenger organisations were supported by the conservative government in Budapest before the Socialists took over the government in 2002 (figure 2), and the issue of external minorities lost priority (Waterbury). However, the main Hungarian conservative party Fidesz maintains close ties to these new challenger organisation. The support of Fidesz of the radical wings of the Hungarian minority or of Hungarian governments of Hungarian cultural institutions in Romania and Slovakia also involved the establishment of clientelistic networks. These clientelistic networks of the radical wings balance to some degree the office spoils that the UDMR are able to extract from government participation.

Again in opposition for a year in 2009

As the PCM could not score major electoral successes, and as the UDMR found itself after 2008 in opposition for the first time in 12 years, cooperation between the rivalling organisations became easier. The weakened position of the UDMR in the opposition led to the dismissal of several Hungarian heads of regional public administration institutions (Bartunek, 2010: 343). The politicisation of these offices led to massive protest by the UDMR and was

also followed by some public demonstrations by the Hungarian minority. As of 2009, the UDMR and the CNMT institutionalised their cooperation, both in elections and in programmatic terms. They formed working groups for main issues such as autonomy, higher education, and for constitutional and electoral legislation. For the European Parliamentary elections in 2009, they ran with a joint list. Yet the new education law of 2009 contained some significant improvements related to the concerns of national minorities. University faculties could now be founded by government decree and not only by the decision of the university senate, implying that finally, the Hungarian departments at the Babeş-Bolyai University were opened.[7] After the government crisis of autumn 2009, the UDMR again joined the government led by the PD-L (see rings in figure 2).

4.2. The developments in the Slovak Republic

xxx Figure 3 about here xxx

The fragmented political representation of the Hungarians until 1998

During the communist regime the Hungarian minority's only mass organisation was the Czechoslovak Hungarian Workers' Cultural Association (CSEMADOK). It had cultural goals, but during the Prague Spring in 1968, it became also an advocate of minority rights (Varga). At the end of 1970s the political opposition within the Hungarian minority against communism was growing and in 1978 the Czechoslovak Hungarian Minority Rights Committee (CSMKJB) was founded that claimed for more rights for the Hungarian minority but also for democratic transition (Tóth 248). After the breakdown of the communist regime, the Hungarian minority quickly mobilized. The Hungarian political party scene in Slovakia was composed of three major Hungarian parties and two minor ones in the beginning of the 1990s. They were mainly divided by their relationship with the past regime. Regional divides reflecting a different level of economic development of the Eastern and Western part of the Hungarian region in Slovakia have never become sources of political divides within the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. The Independent Hungarian Initiative (MOS), a liberal party, has cooperated with Public Against Violence (VPN), the major Slovak force behind the velvet revolution in Czechoslovakia. In 1990 it ran with VPN in the federal and national elections and it entered the government at both levels (Öllös 54). Two other Hungarian parties, the Coexistence movement (Spolužitie) that emerged from the CSEMADOK and the Hungarian Christian-Democratic Movement (MKDH) were rooted in the Christian-Democratic tradition. They ran jointly in the 1990 federal and national elections, and joined the opposition in

Parliament. After the rise of the electoral threshold to 5% in 1992, the minority parties could only succeed in coalitions. The Independent Hungarian Initiative, renamed as the Hungarian Civic Party (MOS), went alone, and failed. Coexistence and the MKDH[8] entered Parliament in a coalition, but stayed in opposition (Öllös 55). Two years later, learning from the failure of the MOS in the previous elections, the three minority parties (Coexistence, the MKDH, the MOS) formed an electoral coalition. Forced by the renewed tightening of the electoral rules in 1998 which included the introduction of a higher threshold for coalitions than parties, the coalition merged into one party under the name the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK) (see figure 3).[9]

In the beginning of the 1990s, all Hungarian minority parties were calling for collective rights and were elaborating their own autonomy plans. Despite its name, Coexistence was the most radical among the three major Hungarian parties; not only demanding cultural, but also territorial autonomy (Öllös 64-67; Szarka "The Multi-Party System" 85-91). The peak of the Hungarian parties' aspiration for territorial autonomy culminated in a gathering of Hungarian local mayors and representatives in 1994 which was initiated by Coexistence. However in 1996, the administrative reform decreased the number of territories with Hungarian majorities, aiming at undermining future attempts to establish territorial autonomy in the mainly Hungarian-populated territories. In a similar vein, in 1990 Coexistence had already submitted a draft law on the establishment of an independent Hungarian university which was rejected in the federal parliament (Sándor 36-38). Finally, the new language law in 1995 forbade the use of any language except Slovakian in the state administration so that the main demands of the Hungarian parties in Slovakia have been largely ignored by the Mečiar governments (Hamberger "Can the Use" 3).

The SMK in government (1998 - 2006)

From 1998 to 2006 the now unified Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK) was in the pro-democratic government of Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda, with the Slovak Democratic Coalition as main coalition partner (re-established in 2002 as Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKÚ) (Öllös 56). The coalition was oversized, and the SMK was included in order to underline the coalition's commitment to oust Mečiar and to restore good relations with the West (Krause 69). The SMK was allowed to participate in government on the condition that it renounced its most controversial claims: it would no longer mention the foundation of an independent Hungarian university, territorial autonomy on ethnic basis, or the abolition of the Beneš decrees (Szarka "Administrative Reform" 128). In figure 3, this is

displayed as a party trajectory towards more moderate fields. The SMK thereafter focused on administrative reform and on tertiary education in Hungarian (Hamberger "The Hungarian Coalition" 107). However, the implementation of the government program was not as fast as the SMK might have hoped. The reversal of the regulations of the former Mečiar government (e.g. the restoration of the right to bilingual report cards and school records, the reinstatement of dismissed school principals) were less controversial than new rights for the Hungarian minority (Hamberger "The Hungarian Coalition" 110; Némethová and Öllös 125). The adoption of a law on the use of minority language, and administrative reforms were a precondition for the negotiations about EU access: the pressure was on to reach a compromise on these, despite the fact that the issue was highly contested between the SMK and the Slovak majority parties. The new minority language law was passed in 1999, but while enabling the use of minority languages, the threshold was set higher than asked for (20% minority population instead of 10%) (Hamberger "The Hungarian Coalition" 108). While new financial sources were provided for education in the Hungarian language, a Hungarian university faculty was not opened (Némethová and Öllös 120-34). The law on administrative reforms in 2001 did not fulfil the central demand of the SMK to create a county with a Hungarian majority, due to opposition from the left-wing parties in the coalition, the Party of Civic Understanding (SOP) and the Party of the Democratic Left (SDL) (Hamberger "The Hungarian Coalition" 109; Szarka "Administrative Reform" 128-31).

European institutions were able to exert leverage on the level of minority protection in this period since if the government coalitions supported European integration and democratisation. However, minority rights remained vaguely formulated as conditions of EU accession, therefore domestic actors were oftentimes able to interpret “Western norm” favourable to their own strategies (Csergö 74-77). The conservative governing party Fidesz also tried to interpret European norms according to its interests and tried to put the Beneš decrees on the political agenda in 2002, demanding that their removal should be a condition for EU membership. The SMK stuck however to its agreement that the question would not be opened ongoing government period (Jarábik 146).

After the 2002 parliamentary elections, the new centre-right coalition had a very narrow lead, and the SMK votes were needed to gain a majority (figure 3). Similar to the previous legislative period, the SMK did not manage to include its demands for administrative reform that would have eased the establishment of territorial autonomy and the abolishment of the Beneš decrees. The main success of the SMK in this government period was the establishment

of an independent Hungarian university in Komarno (Jarábik 148; Hamberger "The Hungarian Coalition" 111).

The ideological differences between the parties which formed the SMK soon disappeared after the merger in 1998, and the Christian conservative and the ethno-nationalistic line represented by Coexistence and the Hungarian Christian-Democratic Movement dominated. Quarrels emerged on the question of programmatic concessions that the party made to join the coalition: it did not insist on creating a region with a Hungarian majority, while the law on administration reform and the use of minority languages were not in line with the SMK's demands. Not surprisingly, in the second government period internal struggles centred on the question of autonomy (Hamberger "The Hungarian Coalition" 113-15). The adoption of the Status Law by the conservative government in Budapest fuelled the tensions within the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. The SMK – after an initial trial to mediate between Budapest and Bratislava – withdrew from the discussion (Jaràbik, 2003: 146-148). The founding of a minor Hungarian party that wanted to put the territorial reforms back on the political agenda (the Hungarian Federalist Party, MFP) had little successful (Új Szó "Protests Against").[10]

Back in the opposition, and the SMK split (2006 - 2010)

The new government coalition of economic left-wing and nationalist parties (Smer, SNS, HZDS) of 2006 excluded the SMK. During this government period the SMK was largely absorbed by its growing internal struggles. In 2007 Béla Bugár, the president of the SMK since its inception, was replaced by Pál Csáky. On this occasion Csáky openly criticized Bugár for its accommodative course and for representing the interests of private economic circles (Šutaj and Sápos "The Hungarian Minority" 43-44). During 2007, the new party leadership planned to submit a proposition on the restitution to the victims of the Beneš decrees – a very controversial move in Slovak politics (see the change of SMK's course in figure 3). Facing massive internal and external critique, the SMK soon abandoned the matter. However, the seed of conflict was sown. The most controversial issues (territorial autonomy, Beneš decrees) were taken on by extra-parliamentary associations, representing radical voices of the Hungarian minority (Šutaj and Sápos "The Hungarian Minority" 44-47; Šutaj and Sápos "The Situation Of" 27-31). The Slovak government reacted by adopting contrary resolutions and regulations on the Beneš decrees and on the use of minority languages.

Despite the new SMK leadership distancing itself from the controversial move, a large part of the party's representatives, led by the former party president of the SMK Bugár, split off in summer 2009, and established a new party (displayed in figure 3). Under the label

Most–Híd ('bridge' in Slovak and Hungarian), they were already competing in the regional elections in autumn 2009. Most–Híd was founded in the spirit of cooperation between the Slovak and the Hungarian people and of any other national minority, proclaiming Slovakia as a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and a multi-lingual state. Among others, its main demand in the minority field is the adoption of a comprehensive law on the status of minorities. Furthermore, it demanded the option for minority languages to be used in interactions with public authorities in municipalities with a minority share of 10% of the population. Finally, it demanded the modification of the controversial language law, in particular the abolishment of the sanctions for infringements (Most-Híd). Most–Híd also proposed a reconciliation process between Hungary and Slovakia. This was their answer to rising tensions between the new Hungarian conservative-nationalist government and the Slovak nationalists, after the Hungarian government announced citizenship for ethnic Hungarians abroad.[11]

In the 2009 regional elections Most–Híd remained largely electorally insignificant, receiving less than 1% of the votes. In the parliamentary elections in 2010 Most–Híd won 8.1% of the votes and SMK 4.3%. Most-Híd succeeded in all areas of Slovakia with a relevant Hungarian population. However, only a small percentage of Slovaks and other minority groups might have voted for Most–Híd. Nevertheless, among the 14 Most–Híd deputies in parliament, only seven were ethnic Hungarian, and the other seven ethnic Slovaks.

While Most–Híd presented a full-scale program, focusing not only on minority issues, the SMK's program was still focused on the situation of the Hungarian minority. It also touched on sensitive issues, which would not ease cooperation with the Slovak parties, and which Most-Híd did not address: the extension of minority self-governance in the field of culture, education and regional public administration, the creation of minority-dominated regions, and (implicitly) a call for the elimination of the Beneš decrees (SMK-MKP). The SMK brand marked Most–Híd as a betrayer of the Hungarian interests in its electoral campaign, unsuccessfully however. When in 2010, the Hungarian government introduced citizenship and voting rights for Hungarian minorities abroad, Hungarian minority parties in neighbouring states needed to intermediate between the governments of their host and kin state, in order to avoid a polarisation which might have been detrimental to their position (Jarábik 146-48; Hamberger "The Hungarian Coalition" 114-15). In Slovakia, the issue received more attention, as it coincided with the electoral campaign. Accordingly, the SMK leadership asked the Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán not to campaign on their side in the electoral campaign in 2010 since they feared that radical right parties would play the “Hungarian card”. The success of Most–Híd and the failure of the SMK to enter the parliament and the next

government, were completely unforeseen and had an effect akin to an earthquake in the political landscape of the Hungarian community in Slovakia.

The multi-ethnic party Most–Híd in government (2010 -)

The Most–Híd party joined the centre-right government led by the SDKÚ-DS coalition, which had a more conciliatory program towards the Hungarian minority than the previous left-wing-nationalist coalition (see figure 3). Most of Most–Híd's demands made it into the governmental program, especially the planned modification of the state language law cancelling financial sanctions for infringements, the decrease of the threshold for the use of a minority language, and double citizenship rules for the Hungarians of Slovakia. The only point that was not included in the governmental program was a law on the status of minorities. Meanwhile, the Hungarian government further fuelled tensions by additionally granting voting rights for members of the Hungarian minorities who take up the Hungarian citizenship, hindering a compromise in the Slovak coalition.

The SMK's reaction to the government program was mixed. Some of the demands were criticized as not been extensive enough, like the modifications of the language law and the failure to include a law on the status of minorities (Új Szó "Provisions against Hungarians"). Yet the SMK has ceased bringing up the most controversial issues such as the Beneš decrees, the reform of the territorial structure of the public administration or the call for autonomy.

5. Discussion

Large parts of the literature on power-sharing deal with ethnic minorities as unified, monolithic blocs, which can be considered as single actors. This article puts this view into question, and brings the internal political dynamics of ethnic minorities in, by studying splits between parties of ethnic minorities. The structure and the positioning of ethnic minority parties might have important consequences for the prospect of political solutions of ethnic conflicts, not least because internal political splits of ethnic minorities in some cases might foster ethnic outbidding, yet in others facilitate the formation of cross-cutting cleavages and the creation of inter-ethnic coalitions.

This article discusses the impact of domestic politics on the degree to which ethnic minority parties radicalise their positions. It argues that the inclusion of parties of ethnic minorities into governmental coalitions affects their internal political dynamics and their positioning. As a consequence, it also determines the political direction of intra-group challengers, i.e. parties which compete against a dominant ethnic minority party. Empirically, the article looks at the formation of two new parties of the Hungarian minorities in Romania

and in Slovakia, in 2007 and 2009. In the two cases, new parties emerged, and were competing against a previously dominant party of the Hungarian minority.

5.1. The interplay of governmental inclusion and minority party dynamics

In both countries, the splits only happened after the parties of the Hungarian minorities had been established for 10 or 15 years. During the first half of the 1990s, in both countries, two camps emerged that had a different view on how autonomy for the Hungarian minority should be established. Moderates favoured a close cooperation with mainstream parties and saw government participation as the main tool for policy influence. Radicals insisted on the immediate establishment of autonomy. When in 1996 in Romania and 1998 in Slovakia, the Hungarian minority parties were included in the government coalitions, they renounced their calls for territorial autonomy. Radicals complained that the moderate party leaderships unnecessarily put these on hold or even completely abandoned them, and their governmental inclusion was motivated solely by private interests. Growing internal tensions finally led to the split of the dominant Hungarian minority parties.

5.2. The political orientation of the intra-group challenger parties

In Slovakia, the dominant minority party became more radical after it was no longer included in the government and a new leadership took over. Dissatisfied with this confrontational style, a breakaway fraction formed a new, moderate challenger party.

The contrary happened in Romania. The UDMR was perceived to be moderate, as it renounced crucial political claims, leading to growing dissatisfaction among the radicals within the party. The radical break-away factions organized themselves in different organisations outside the framework of the UDMR. On the one hand, the CNMT and its satellite organisation the CNT are aiming for the realisation of a comprehensive system of autonomy addressing the concerns of the whole Hungarian community. On the other hand, since 2001, the Hungarian Civic Party has been evolving in a mainly bottom-up process with a main goal of providing an alternative to the UDMR in the counties with a Hungarian majority, and the realisation of the territorial autonomy of the Szekler Land.

5.3. Comparison to other cases

The mechanism at play might possibly be generalisable for ethnic minorities in other countries too. Further examples, to which our model might extend, include the Albanian minority parties in Macedonia, or the Bosniak parties in Serbia. In line with the Romanian and

Slovak examples, the fluctuation and programmatic change of these parties might be driven by their inclusion into the government, or their status as oppositional.

While our findings are based on two particular examples, and should therefore be taken with the necessary grain of salt, they might eventually add to the understanding of political conflict in ethnically divided societies. One major concern of the literature is that the competition between different parties of the same ethnic group leads to a spiral of mutual radicalisation. The two discussed cases might alter this view. Minorities are internally split, typically between radicals and pragmatists – and therefore, ethnic outbidding is not the only game in town. Instead, we argue that domestic politics matter: the (non-)inclusion of minority parties into the government can influence their positioning.

The conclusions that can be drawn from our analysis open a whole set of questions: If alternation of parties between government and opposition prevents radical outbidding, would it be more advisable not to include parties of the ethnic minorities into governments *on a permanent basis*, but rather case by case, based on a coalition agreement? This especially sheds light on a distinction of different types of power-sharing solutions: those, where government inclusion is granted *automatically* to all relevant social groups (or the largest parties representing them), and cases where the governmental inclusion is based on coalition negotiations, and where henceforth, we expect a premium on moderation. Future research might explore the inter-connection of intra-ethnic competition and power-sharing agreements.

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Figure 1

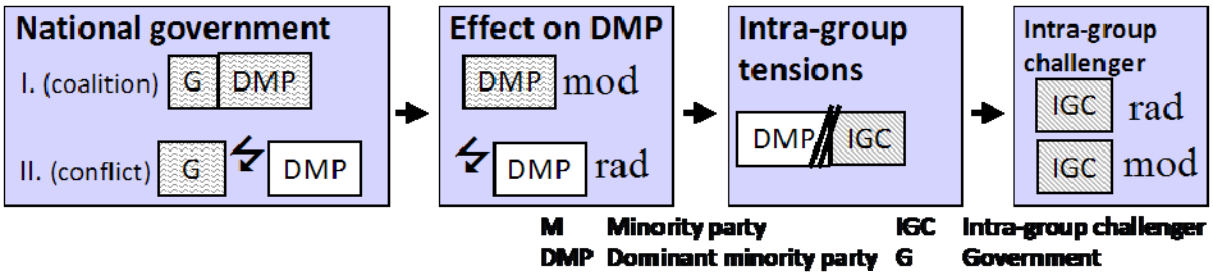


Figure 2

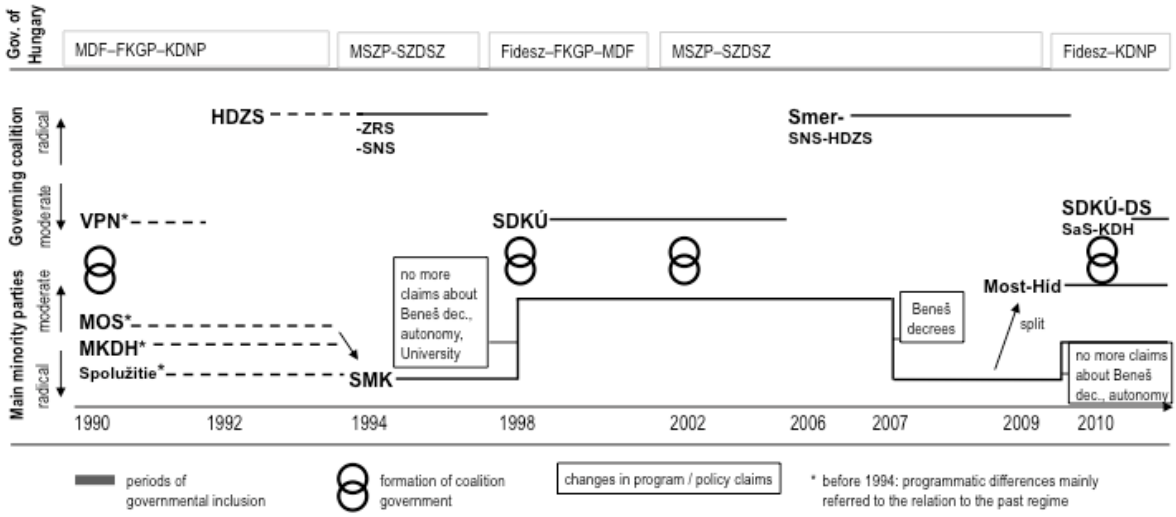
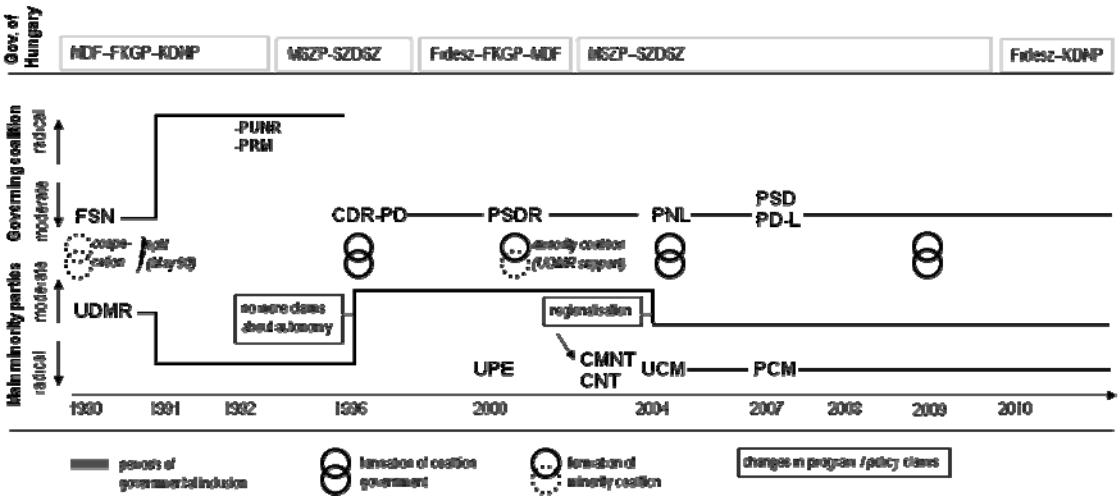


Figure 3



[1] 2002 census of the National Institute of Statistics of Romania (http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/RPL2002INS/vol5/tables/t16.pdf [last accessed on 15 March 2010]). 2001 census of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (http://portal.statistics.sk/files/Sekcie/sek_600/Demografia/SODB/Tabulky/Tabulky_AJ_SODB/tab11.pdf [last accessed on 15 March 2010])

[2] The Romanian electoral system further foresees special seats for ethnic minority parties – amounting to 18 in the 2004 parliamentary elections. Each minority list that reaches a threshold of votes – just 10% of the votes usually needed for a parliamentary seats – is guaranteed a minority seat in parliament, but each minority group can obtain only one such seat (Alionescu). These rules guarantee the representation of small minorities, but restrict representation to only one MP (and one party/organisation per minority group), and jointly, the representatives of the small minorities relativise the importance of the Hungarian minority as the largest minority group.

[3] In 2008, Romania has changed to a mixed compensatory electoral system, still keeping the 5% national legal threshold. While since, it is possible for a party to win single-seat districts in a district, it is implausible that a dissident minority party will win six or more direct district seats – as much as would be exempted from the threshold requirement according to the new Romanian electoral law.

[4] The degree of radicalism is not measured in absolute terms in this paper, and can therefore not be compared across countries.

[5] There has been a considerable speculation on the existence of a secret protocol on the conditions of co-operation between the UDMR and the other coalition parties. However, it is most likely that apart from the governmental program no other written documents existed which has also been signed by the UDMR (Horváth 2002: 46; Kántor and Bárdi 2000: 162).

[6] Szekler Land is the part of Transylvania with a Hungarian minority and which encompasses Hargitha and Covasna counties and parts of the Mureş county.

[7] Further, Romanian could from now on be taught by special books and according to special plans to national minorities. Yet, the longstanding claim for the education of the subjects of history and geography in minority language remained unfulfilled (Bartunek 352-53).

[8] The alliance included a third minor Hungarian party, the Hungarian People's Party which however has not managed to enter the parliament.

[9] In 1995 the Hungarian People's Movement for Reconciliation and Welfare has been formed. It run in the national elections in 1998 but received only 0.19% of the votes (Millard 86).

[10] The party did not even manage to collect sufficient signatures for registration, and gathered solely a few hundred people in a demonstration in 2003 (Új Szó "Protests Against").

[11] In the forefront of the national elections in Slovakia the new conservative right Hungarian government announced the introduction of double citizenship for ethnic Hungarians abroad. This highly symbolic and controversial move of the Hungarian government was followed by the Slovak government's restriction of the law on citizenship threatening the Hungarians to lose their Slovak citizenship if they would embrace the Hungarian citizenship.